



2005 Minerals Yearbook

RWANDA

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF RWANDA

By Thomas R. Yager

Rwanda's mineral industry produced gold ores and concentrates of columbium (niobium), tantalum, tin, and tungsten, most of which was designated for export. This small country in central Africa also reexported concentrates of columbium (niobium), tantalum, and tin that were produced in Congo (Kinshasa). Rwanda also produced cement, sapphire, and small quantities of natural gas, and was known to have deposits of beryllium, kaolin, and peat.

Coopérative de Promotion de l'Industrie Minière Artisanale, Régie d'Exploitation et de Développement des Mines (REDEMI), and other companies produced ores of columbium (niobium) and tantalum, tin (cassiterite), and tungsten (wolframite). REDEMI operated columbite-tantalite processing facilities at Gatumba. In 2005, exports of columbite-tantalite concentrates totaled 1,062 metric tons (t) at a value of \$15.4 million. Columbite-tantalite accounted for nearly 14% of total exports in 2005 compared with 13% in 2004 and 45% in 2001 (Banque Nationale du Rwanda, 2006b).

REDEMI operated a cassiterite-processing facility at Rutongo; the company produced 205 t of cassiterite in 2004 compared with 168 t in 2003. Rwanda's exports of cassiterite totaled 4,532 t at a value of about \$16.3 million in 2005, most of which was reexported from Congo (Kinshasa). Cassiterite accounted for 14% of total exports in 2005 compared with 16% in 2004 and 1% in 2001 (Global Witness, 2005, p. 24; Banque Nationale du Rwanda, 2006b).

Metal Processing Association operated a cassiterite-processing facility and a tin smelter at Gisenyi. The smelter produced about 200 metric tons per year of tin from cassiterite imported from Congo (Kinshasa) (Global Witness, 2005, p. 19).

REDEMI operated a wolframite-processing facility at Nyakabingo. Exports of tungsten ore (wolframite) amounted to 557 t at a value of about \$2.34 million in 2005, or 2% of total exports. From 2001 to 2004, wolframite accounted for less than 1% of national exports (Banque Nationale du Rwanda, 2006b).

Cimenterie du Rwanda (Cimerwa) was Rwanda's only producer of cement. In the first 6 months of 2005, the company's production declined by 4% because of power

shortages and high fuel oil prices (Kakimba, Majyambere, and Nuwamanya, 2005).

Rwanda produced small amounts of natural gas at Cape Rubona on the shore of Lake Kivu. In 2005, Dane Associates Ltd. signed an agreement with the Government for the construction of a new 35-megawatt power station that would use natural gas extracted from Lake Kivu. Dane Associates planned to start natural gas production at the facility in early 2006 (Reuters Ltd., 2005).

Rwanda did not have production facilities for petroleum products; all petroleum demand was met through imports. In 2005, the value of imported energy products and lubricants amounted to \$44.8 million; energy imports accounted for 12% of Rwanda's total imports (Banque Nationale du Rwanda, 2006a).

Outlook

The outlook for the mineral industry of Rwanda depends on favorable world market conditions for columbium (niobium), gold, tantalum, tin, and tungsten, and on reduced civil strife and political risks in Rwanda's Great Lakes region. The development of domestic natural gas resources could reduce reliance on imported petroleum products and result in more reliable power supplies for mining and mineral-processing operations.

References Cited

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TABLE 1
RWANDA: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity ²		2001	2002	2003	2004 ^c	2005 ^c
Cement		91,204	100,568	104,613	104,205 ³	100,000
Columbite-tantalite, ore and concentrate:						
Gross weight	kilograms	241,000	96,000	128,000	200,000	250,000
Nb content	do.	76,000	30,000	40,000	63,000	80,000
Ta content	do.	53,000	20,000	26,000	40,000	50,000
Gold, mine output, Au content	do.	10 ^e	10 ^e	2	--	--
Natural gas, gross	thousand cubic meters	828	103	314	320	320
Tin:						
Mine output, Sn content		169	197	192	547 ^r	700
Refined ^c		-- ³	40 ^r	200 ^r	200 ^r	200
Tungsten, mine output, W content		142	153	78	120	200

^cEstimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. ^rRevised. -- Zero.

¹Table includes data available through October 25, 2006.

²In addition to the commodities listed, sapphire and pozzolanic materials are also known to be produced, but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

³Reported figure.

TABLE 2
RWANDA: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2005

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Major operating companies	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity ¹
Cement	Cimenterie du Rwanda	Plant at Cyangugu	115,000.
Columbium (niobium) and tantalum	Régie d'Exploitation et de Développement des Mines	Concentrator at Gatumba	20 Nb ₂ O ₅ and Ta ₂ O ₅ in concentrate. ^c
Gold	Artisanal miners	Mines in Nyungwe Forest	NA.
Sapphire	do.	Mines at Cyangugu	NA.
Tin	Régie d'Exploitation et de Développement des Mines	Concentrator at Rutongo	370 in concentrate. ^c
Do.	Metal Processing Association	Concentrator at Gisenyi	NA.
Do.	do.	Smelter at Gisenyi	200.
Tungsten	Régie d'Exploitation et de Développement des Mines	Concentrator at Nyakabingo	170 in concentrate. ^c

^cEstimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. NA Not available.

¹Abbreviations used for commodities in this table include the following: Nb₂O₅--niobium pentoxide and Ta₂O₅--tantalum pentoxide.